

Govt cancels guidelines on probe issued by Thomas

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram:

The government has cancelled the order issued by former vigilance director Jacob Thomas that delegated the powers to register the cases to unit level office heads.



As per the new order issued by the vigilance department on March 29, if during the course of any inquiry or at its conclusion, it is felt that there is sufficient material for registration of a vigilance case, the inquiry officer will seek the sanction of the director, following the instructions given in vigilance manual and the order that was issued in 1992 laying out the directions on how to proceed with the cases.

The circular also says that the procedure of submitting inquiry reports, writing of scrutiny notes and sanction orders will be observed scrupulously as per the provisions contained in

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the vigilance manual.

Thomas, after he had become the vigilance director, had allowed the units to register the cases after inquiry, in the name of delegation of powers. Vigilance sources said that the director had taken such a move to evade the responsibilities of the director in taking a call on the inquiry report.

The guidelines for the functioning of vigilance and registering of cases, issued by the government on May 12, 1992, was being completely side-lined by the agency in registering the cases and conducting searches. According to the rule 4(3) of the guidelines, it is the duty of the vigilance director to seek government permission before registering cases against heads of departments.

With the new order, all pe-

titions or complaints directly received in the various offices under the VACB's 14 district units, four range offices, two special investigation units and three special cells will have to be mailed to the director, VACB. All petitions received at the directorate will be examined in the petition section and will be forwarded to SP (intelligence) in the VACB, who will in turn forward it to the director with appropriate direction for preliminary inquiry, confidential verification, surprise check or recommendation to the vigilance department in the government for sanction to conduct a formal vigilance inquiry.

The high court had of late come heavily on the agency for not following any guidelines for investigation and overstepping all its powers to register cases on matters. In a subsequent meeting of the vigilance officials convened by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the chief minister too had echoed the same sentiments.